

# MATTERS of ART

## Out of the West—Pissarro—The Rouart Sale.

The tide of little exhibitions is pretty nearly at the flood. Two more collections of those "Thumb Box" sketches, whose modest but interesting traits were touched upon in this place last Sunday, are now to be announced. There is one at the Milch Gallery and at the Katz Gallery there is another. American painters are responsible for both these shows. The Detroit Publishing Company is showing in its gallery a group of paintings and pastels by Leon Dabo. Landscapes by the English artist, Alfred Vickers, are on view at the gallery of Moulton & Ricketts, where there may also be seen an exhibition of etchings by Frank Brangwyn, Albany E. Howarth, M. Bauer, E. J. MacLaughlin and others. A collection of seventy of Whistler's etchings is hung at the Hahlo Gallery. Mr. Alan Fullerton is displaying at the Plaza Hotel a quantity of eighteenth century English and French color prints belonging to Mr. Basil Dighton, of London. The Braus Gallery brings forward sculptures by Leopold Bracconi, and, by the way, the Macbeth Gallery announces for early in December a show of over a dozen works in marble and probably sixteen bronzes by Mr. Chester Beach. An exhibition of small bronzes by various American sculptors is now open at the galleries of the Gorham Company. The Partridge Gallery is making an exhibition of Prince Tuan's collection of jades. At the New York School of Applied Design for Women Mr. Edwin H. Blasfield is exhibiting for about a month the drawings and sketches he has made for his mural decorations in the new state capitol of Wisconsin and in other public buildings in Ohio and Pennsylvania. A number of caricatures of American actors and actresses by Alfred J. Frueh may be seen at the Photo-Secession Gallery. At Ardsley

paintings by ten or twelve men who have gone out to the Far West for their material. It is announced as a "first annual exhibition," and from a brief preface to the catalogue it would appear that the contributors have the idea of exploiting a specific region which they think has been neglected. "Western America, with its wealth of majestic scenery," we are told, "is an almost untouched field, and that it has not been visited by many artists is an added reason for the existence of this society. Thousands of people visit the American and Canadian Rockies, the Coast, with all its variety; the Yosemite, the Yellowstone Park and the splendid Grand Canyon, and there is a growing surprise that impressions of these beautiful parts of our country are not more often put on canvas." Reference is made to an exhibition of pictures of the Grand Canyon held last season in New York and continued through various cities of the Middle West. It roused wide interest. The plan, evidently, is to keep that interest alive.

It is a good plan, abstractly considered. But everything depends, of course, upon what these artists make of their inspiration, and the first thought provoked by the present collection is that the painter who is to stir us with a sense of the beauty that lies in the Far West must give that beauty something like exhaustive study. We do not know just how long each member of the group has stayed in the West, but we are struck by the fact that the only one of them who leaves a really good impression is Mr. Albert L. Groll, whose work, so far as we can recall it from the exhibitions of several years past, has always been Western in motive. That is to say, he has painted those vast plains of his, with their vaster skies, over and over again, until the true elements of their character have passed into his pictures. His "Navajo Desert" on this occasion



SHEPHERDESSES.  
(From the drawing by Millet in the Rouart Collection.)

House, over in Brooklyn, Mr. Hamilton Easter Field is exhibiting some of his recent paintings.

## The Far West as a Painting Ground.

Ever since the "Ten American Painters" struck out for themselves it has been a fairly common thing for some small group of artists to make a special appeal to the public. Midway between the one-man show and the big miscellaneous exhibition, like that which the academy will presently be opening, we have the latest band of malcontents, or a number of men cultivating some particular medium, or the kind of exhibition that has just been arranged at the Macbeth Gallery. This is composed of

is precisely the sort of handsome painting that he has for a long time known how to produce. Mr. Thomas Moran, too, is on familiar ground, and consequently gives us something unmistakably of the West in his work. Most of the others, on the other hand, appear to be a little at sea. They may have sojourned in the West for a considerable period, but they have not got at its secret. Why should several clever craftsmen be thus ineffective? The reason is simple. There are prodigious mountains in the West, there are heroic gorges, and to get such themes into pictures is one of the hardest imaginable tasks. A genius like Turner knows just what to do. Lesser men may be pardoned if, at the first assault, they meet discomfiture.

The painter of mountains needs, in the first place, a strong grasp upon ground forms and then a peculiar skill in generalizing from his knowledge. He must know his details and he must know even better how to keep them in their place. The trouble with practically all of the work in this exhibition seems to be bigness without grandeur. The artists have been so interested in their subjects, as subjects, so absorbed in "local color," that they have forgotten to paint merely good pictures. Their portentous facts can only be of service in art when they have been interpreted with just the right touch. For their proper interpretation they require, above all, composition. It is all very well to paint as Mr. Parrshall, for example, paints "The Great Abyss" or "The Granite Gorge," but one wants in pictures of such high erected themes the artistic magic which makes an abyss really impressive. Mr. Pott-hast's "Lake Louise, Alberta," is a large canvas given to a large theme, but there is nothing large about his style. In short, these artists would

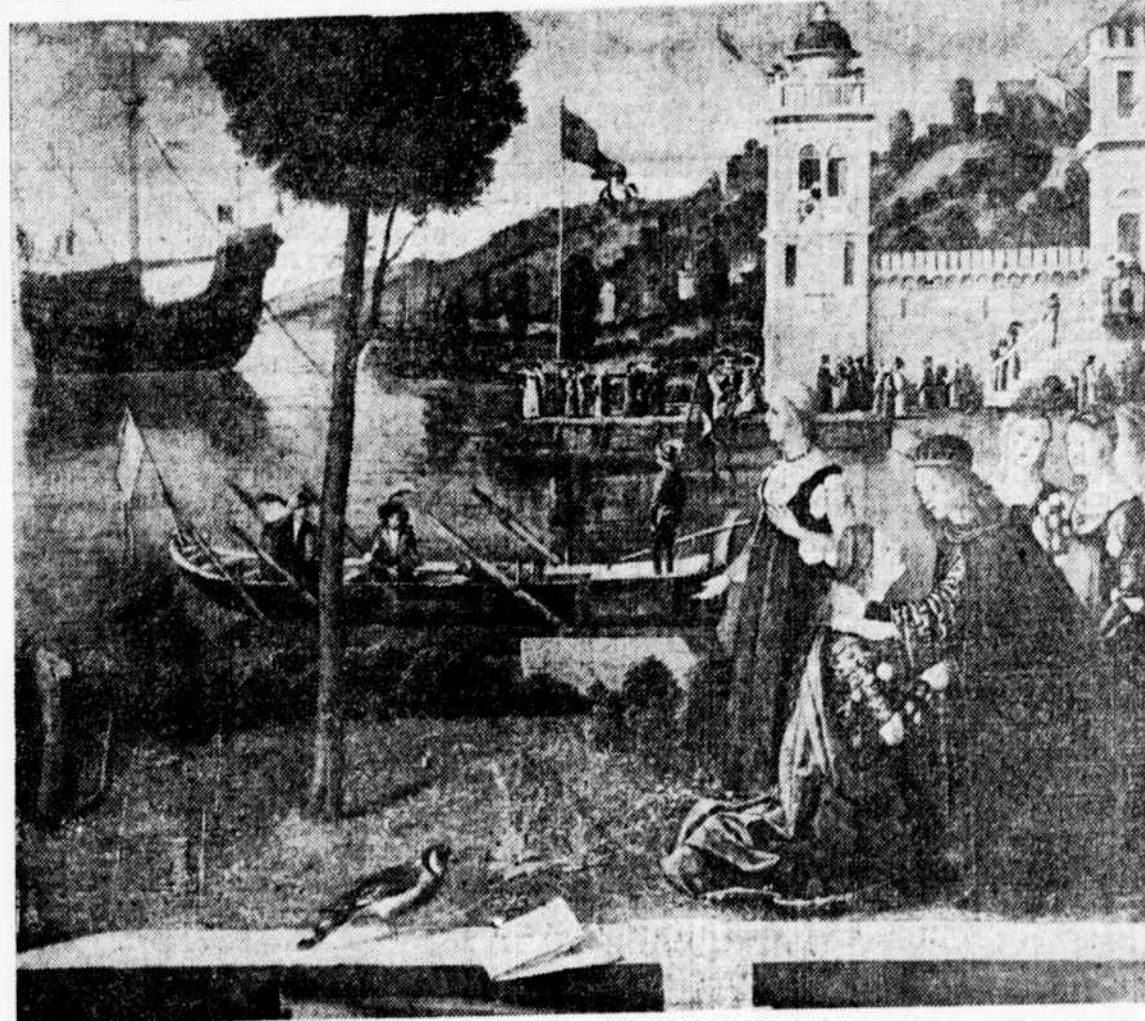


M. ALAUX.  
(From the drawing by Ingres in the Rouart Collection.)

The Annual Exhibition of  
**Thumb Box Sketches**  
Opens Monday, November 25th.

These Sketches  
have been passed  
upon by a  
Jury of Artists

Louis Katz  
Art Galleries  
Inc.  
103 West 74th Street



THE DEPARTURE OF ST. URSULA.  
(From the painting by Carpaccio in the Layard Collection.)

appear to have proceeded on the hypothesis that by dint of setting up their easels in the West and painting what they saw, the West would speak for itself in their work. No locality will do that for any man, and, least of all, will a region oblige in this way when it is strewn with some of the most formidable and most original of Nature's creations. Out there among the mountains there are extraordinary enchantments of form and color. They will be brought East to us on canvas only when our painters have sat long and reverently at the feet of truth and have thoroughly mastered one of the hardest of its alphabets.

## An Impressionist Type Tested By Time.

There was a time when the "Olympia" of Manet was not only looked at askance but was considered as quite outside the pale. Now criticism quite naturally and easily embraces it within the same view that includes, say, the "Odalisque" of Ingres. Impressionism, in short, has been fitted into the European tradition. Beside the vagaries of the Cubist or Futurist it seems very like some ancient, academic formula. This strange and charming readjustment of things, brought about by nothing more or less than the simple passage of time, is delightfully illustrated in the exhibition at the Durand-Ruel gallery of some fifteen or twenty paintings by Pissarro. He was never, it is true, one of the more drastic of the pioneers. He moved prudently and slowly in the development of his talent. There is a landscape here bearing an early date which shows how calmly he stood at the parting of the ways, practising in all good faith the once revolutionary but then sedate method of the Barbizon school. In the 70's he was still sensitive to the influence of the historic 39's. But even then he knew the difference between studio light and the sunshine of the open air.

Deliberately and steadily he ranged himself closer to Manet, getting a fresher air into his work and keying up his scale of color. There are landscapes in the Durand-Ruel show extraordinarily vivid and luminous. Once he had found himself Pissarro went the full length of impressionism. All this, however, is an old story, and there is no need at this late day exhaustively to analyze his work. What is more amusing to point out is the sobriety which marks it. Time has toned down these plangent canvases. The color is still rich and strong, but it has settled comfortably, and by comparison with what the latest experimentalists would do it seems profoundly conservative. One notices, too, the artist's well pondered design, his careful and expressive drawing, his positively respectful regard for textures. Once impressionism was a challenge, an affair of audacity and recklessness. In a deeper perspective it seems mildness itself. Pissarro has no excitements to offer. He is gently and suavely beguiling. He asserts not himself or his theories but the fresh loveliness of landscape and even something of its poetry. In this

he is representative of the school to which he belonged. Manet, Monet, Renoir—they are all, in a sense, classical to-day.

## The Rouart Collection of Old and Modern Works.

A great sale is soon to be held in Paris at the Manzi-Joyant Gallery. It will dispose of the collection formed by the late Henri Rouart, who in the course of his adventures among masterpieces described the full circle of taste. He savored the art of David and he cared also for the art of Degas, who was, by the way, one of the comrades of his college days. Through the courtesy of M. Durand-Ruel, one of the experts associated with the sale, we have received a copy of the catalogue. The first volume enumerates nearly three hundred old and modern paintings which are to be sold on the afternoons of December 9, 10 and 11. The second volume records about the same number of drawings and pastels, mostly of modern origin. These are to be sold on the afternoons of December 16, 17 and 18. The scores of well made illustrations serve to recall in the most interesting manner a collection which has long been famous in France.

The Spanish masters are notable in the older categories. There are several fine examples of El Greco, and there is one indubitably beautiful Goya, a portrait of a woman. The Velasquez does not quite carry conviction, but in any case it is a spirited and interesting portrait. There are some good examples of Tiepolo, and we note a couple of striking religious subjects by Jan Scorel and Bernard Strigel. Other old masters, especially of the French school, give good accounts of themselves in the reproductions. But while this part of the collection has its solid importance, it is for his modern pictures that M. Rouart will be remembered. He brought together some glorious paintings by Corot, and was particularly appreciative of those figure pieces which in more recent years have come to be reckoned among the most characteristic things that the painter ever did. The collection is rich, too, in those smaller, more casual landscape notes into which Corot poured the very essence of his personality. Nearly fifty of his paintings are catalogued, and as they seem to be in every instance of serious quality it is plain that the sale on this score alone constitutes an event.

The Courbets illustrated include one magnificent figure piece, a portrait of the philosopher Trapadoux, seated with a book in his lap. Millet is in fine form, both as regards paintings and drawings. Among the former is the famous "L'homme à la Veste," a composition as monumental as "The Angelus." Two noble landscapes by him are also illustrated. As for the Millet drawings, they make by themselves an astounding collection. There are nearly three score of them, and those reproduced, at all events, are so many gems of powerful draftsmanship, so many gems of feeling and style. Daubigny, Puvion de Chavannes, Delacroix, Renoir, Gauguin, Ingres, Jongkind, Fantin-Latour, Monet and Ricard

are among the other heroes of this collection. M. Rouart had his clearly defined enthusiasms. When he was interested in Degas he bought not one, but twelve or fifteen souvenirs of that artist. It was the same, as we have indicated, when he was attracted by Millet or Corot. But it is obvious that he had discrimination, and, into the



SULTAN MOHAMMED II.  
(From the portrait by Gentile Bellini in the Layard Collection.)

bargain, good luck. The sale will make a sensation.

**AN OLD TIME EPITAPH.**  
From Burford Church, Oxfordshire.  
Here shadows lie,  
Whilst life is sad,  
Still hopes to die  
To him she hadd,  
In bliss is hee,  
Whom I lov'd best,  
Thrice happy shee,  
With him to rest.  
So shall I bee  
With him I lov'd,  
And hee with mee,  
And both us blessed.  
Love made me Poet  
And this I writt,  
My harte did do yt  
And not my witt.

## THE LAYARD COLLECTION

### A Great Gift for England's National Gallery.

When "Nineveh" Layard, Sir Austen Henry Layard, died, in 1894, there probably was not a connoisseur of Italian art anywhere in the world who did not instantly wonder what would become of this Englishman's pictures. For years in his Venetian home, the Ca' Capello, his collection had been the object of many a pious pilgrimage. He bequeathed it to the National Gallery, only stipulating that the gift was not to take effect until the death of his widow. Lady Layard's recent death has made the transfer of the pictures from Venice to London possible within a very short time, and the English newspapers are full of details relating to one of the choicest groups of Italian masterpieces ever formed.

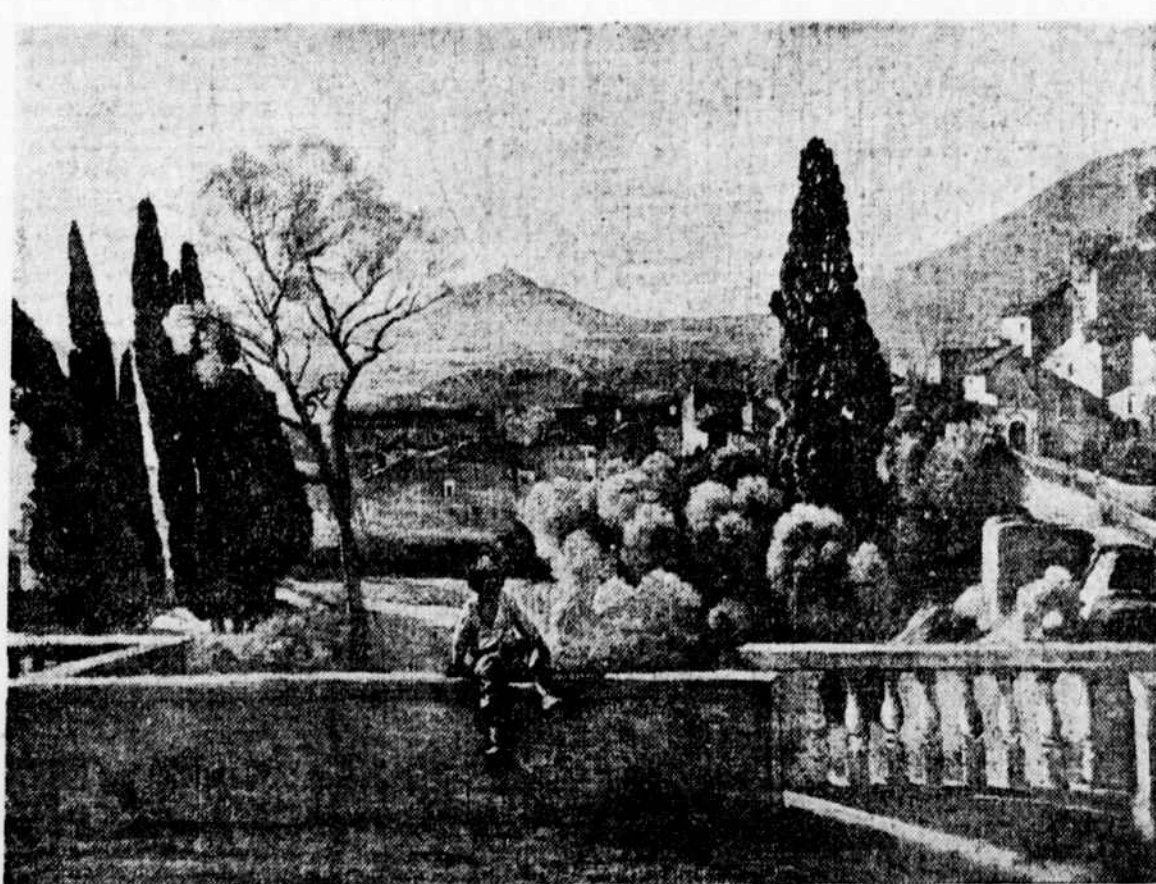
Naturally the occasion has also revived memories of Layard himself. Mr. Maurice W. Brockwell, writing in the London "Morning Post," introduces his remarks on the collection with some interesting notes on the man who made it:

Layard was born in Paris in 1817, spent his youth and received his education in Italy, and came to London for the first time at the age of sixteen. His intention was to qualify as a solicitor, but the future excavator of Babylon soon found that he had little adaptability for the sedentary duties of the legal profession. At the relatively early age of twenty-two he travelled to Constantinople, and ten years later received an appointment as attaché to the embassy there. Although he only held that appointment for a short time, he often recalled it with interest when contemplating the "Portrait of the Sultan Mohammed II." by Gentile Bellini, which he purchased in Venice at a later date. In 1852 he published his "Discoveries in the Ruins of Babylon and Nineveh," the result of a second expedition undertaken for the trustees of the British Museum, and that work brought about the first public recognition of his services to the nation. It seems that "Mr. Bell" as he was known for many years to his intimate friends from his excavations of Assyrian animals now preserved in the British Museum, acquired as his first painting the fragment of the celebrated fresco representing "The Fall of Lucifer," by Spinello Aretino, which he sent to the Art Treasures Exhibition

at Manchester in 1857. This and the two other fragments of the same composition were formerly in the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli at Arezzo, and are mentioned by Vasari. In October, 1859, he wrote to his friend Mrs. Ross that he had been "rummaging about in various holes and corners in search of something to throw away my money upon. I have only succeeded in finding one picture which is worth having and within my means. It is attributed to Palma Vecchio, and may or may not be by him, but I think you will like it. The subject is St. George and the damsel he has delivered kneeling down to return thanks for the vanquished dragon. I have seen one or two things I should like to have, but travellers spoil the market by giving absurd prices for worthless things." Romantic as that picture undoubtedly is, it has not yet come to be unreservedly accepted by the critics as the work of the elder Palma. It, nevertheless, recalls the truism that the collector's enrage usually begins by acquiring a work of art of doubtful authenticity.

We reproduce with special interest the two most renowned paintings that Layard owned, the "Portrait of the Sultan Mohammed II." by Gentile Bellini, and Carpaccio's "Departure of St. Ursula." The first of these would alone make a priceless gift to the National Gallery, and we make no excuse for printing below all that Mr. Brockwell has to say about it:

Foremost place among the collection of pictures which he formed in a relatively brief space of time and on the advice of his friend Morelli, and which it was his special delight to show to his guests, will readily be assigned by the art historian to the "Portrait of the Sultan Mohammed II." by that great and rarely found Venetian master, Gentile Bellini. It is admirably painted and belongs to his middle period, but is in a somewhat impaired state. It is placed in the first room that the visitor enters, and is hung on the left wall by the window that looks out on to the Canal San Polo. It will be recalled that the Sultan's ambassador arrived in Venice on the 1st of August, 1479, and expressed the wish of his august master that a distinguished portrait painter should be sent to him from Venice. The choice of the Venetian Republic fell upon Gentile, and on September the 2d he set sail in a Venetian galley at the expense of the state. The fact that the great Ottoman conqueror had his portrait painted, as we now see, proves that he was by no means a strict Mussulman. He is bearded, has a thin aquiline nose, a cruel eye, and a cynical mouth. The portrait is placed by the painter within an arched opening; beneath it he has painted a richly jewelled tapestry, which serves as an ornamental drape to the parapet of the window through which the Sultan is seen. The inscription to the left is partly effaced, but that to the right gives the date as "MCCCCLXXX, DIE XXV, MENSIS NOVEMBRIS." In the upper portion of the picture, both left and right, are three six pointed crowns, which, doubtless,



AT TIVOLI—THE VILLA D'ESTE.  
(From the painting by Corot in the Rouart Collection.)

stand for the three kingdoms of Constantinople, Trebizond and Iconium. Let into the lower part of the frame are three medals with significant Latin inscriptions. Few pictures have had so romantic a history. Painted in Constantinople, it appears to have subsequently formed part of the collection of historical portraits owned by Paolo Giovio. It is believed to have once been in the possession of the Venturi family, and in the early part of the nineteenth century was the property of an Englishman who had been in the service of the Venetian Republic. That Englishman's son sold it under remarkable circumstances to the late Sir Henry Layard when he was about to leave the Ca' Capello one day to catch a train, a quarter of an hour's walk away, on the other side of the Grand Canal. The importunities of picture vendors were naturally nothing new to Layard; but when the man uncovered his treasure its acquisition for 100 scudi, it is said and not a pressing engagement, became the great collector's first concern.

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